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## Students' perceptions towards entrepreneurship education for self-employment, job creation, and job-seeking intentions in national polytechnics in western Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the perceptions of entrepreneurship finalist students towards entrepreneurship education for self-employment, job creation and job seeking intentions in National Polytechnics in western Kenya. Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen (1991). This theory links one's belief and behaviour. Using a quantitative approach, the study adopted descriptive survey research design and data was collected from all 273 entrepreneurship diploma students using questionnaires in Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia Counties. The researcher used simple random sampling technique to select two National polytechnics out of five National polytechnics in Western Kenya, purposive sampling procedures to select students (level of study). Data was analysed using SPSS version 21 where descriptive and inferential statistics were performed. The study revealed that: Students have positive perception towards entrepreneurship education and they agreed that it influence their self-employment and job creation intentions and entrepreneurial background of students influence their self-employment and job creation intentions. The study recommends that entrepreneurship education tutors should use active methods that cultivate entrepreneurial culture among students and Kenya institute of curriculum development should work closely with curriculum implementer to review entrepreneurship education syllabus to make it more practical oriented and ensure that it is fully implemented and evaluated so as to enhance venture into entrepreneurial activities to create jobs for others as well as being self-employed.*

**Keywords:** Perceptions, Entrepreneurship education, students' Self-employment, Job Creation, Job Seeking Intentions, National Polytechnics

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In Kenya, youth entrepreneurship education was and is being emphasized since many youths leaving higher learning institutions in Kenya have no stable source of earning a living and unemployment among them is the song of the day. The 2019 Kenya National population census that is always conducted by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics after every 10 years was almost being disturbed by the youth who claimed to have education but jobless. According to International Labour Organization (2017), the rate of Kenyan youth unemployment stands at 26.21% being too high compared to her neighbour countries like Tanzania standing at 24%, Ethiopia standing at 21.6% and Uganda at 18.1 %. This is being led by millions of graduates being released from the higher learning institutions with a mindset of white-collar jobs instead of creating jobs.

To solve this menace of unemployment among school leavers, the government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education saw the need of introducing entrepreneurship education across all departments in post-secondary learning institutions. A study conducted in Kenya by Murithi (2013) disclosed that the government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education introduced entrepreneurship education in Kenyan higher learning institutions to enable learners to get entrepreneurial skills that will make them to be self-reliant, create jobs for others, become innovative, creative and industrious. Liguori Et al, (2018) concluded that entrepreneurship education is very useful in increasing the innovativeness, creativity, boosting entrepreneurial spirit among learners, learners become industrious, self-reliant and a spirit of self-employment is built in them hence reducing unemployment among themselves.

In Malaysia, Narasmah and Nurzefirah (2018) revealed that students had positive perceptions towards entrepreneurship education and this was boosting entrepreneurship education. In his study in Norway and Russia, Kristskaya (2015) emphasized that Students had a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education and they believed that entrepreneurship education enables one to have skills of starting and running a business. In South Africa, Muofhe and Toit (2011) carried out research on entrepreneurial educations perceptions and it was found that entrepreneurship students had relative positive perceptions and stronger entrepreneurial intention than non-entrepreneurship students. Therefore, positive perceptions are paramount for successful embracement of entrepreneurship education and venturing into entrepreneurial activities to create jobs for others as well as being self-employed.

Polytechnics in Kenya are one of the avenues where entrepreneurship education is being conducted. Polytechnics are under TVET and according to TVETA strategic plan (2018 -2022) and the impact of TVET in Kenya is to continuously improve on their systems which deliver graduates that create employment and entrepreneurship opportunities that contribute to sustainable economic, social and environmental development for Kenya within regional and global context. The strategic plan further states that TVET delivery systems are well placed to train the skilled and entrepreneurial workforce that Kenya needs to create wealth and attain vision 2030. Despite the importance of entrepreneurship education and the government’s efforts to fund polytechnic institutions in Kenya with high hopes of graduates from such institutions to have entrepreneurial culture enabling them to be self-employed and create jobs for others, the problem of unemployment is still a big issue in the country and entrepreneurship education has not successfully enjoyed tremendous feat. Murithi (2013) and KNBS (2018) note concluded that youth polytechnic graduates are still suffering unemployment and under-employment despite the much investment by the government and this leads to young men and women being lured to drugs, prostitution and terrorism.

Based on the above, this study investigated the entrepreneurship education students’ perceptions on self-employment, job creation and job seeking intentions of final year entrepreneurship polytechnic students in Kenya especially in selected National polytechnics in western Kenya to find answers as to why majority of students from entrepreneurship class are not ready to venture into entrepreneurial activities to create jobs for others as well as being self-employed.

**2. METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a quantitative approach and was positioned as a descriptive survey research design. A study by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) stated that this type of research attempts to describe behaviours, perceptions, attitudes, values and characteristics of the population under study. W. Creswell and J. Creswell (2017) asserts that a survey design provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes and opinions of a population or test for relationships among variables of a population, by studying a sample of that population. The research design chosen was the best for this study since the researcher intended to find out students’ perceptions towards entrepreneurial intention (self- employment intentions, job creation intention), job seeking intentions, attitude, behaviours and characteristics of polytechnics students in Kenya.

The research was carried out in Western Kenya. The study involved National polytechnics in western Kenya. In this study western Kenya constituted the following counties: Busia, Vihiga, Kakamega, Kisumu, Kisii, Homabay, Siaya, Migori, Bungoma, Trans Nzoia, and Uasin Ngishu counties. Two polytechnics out of five were randomly selected for this study. Using questionnaires, data was collected from all 273 randomly selected entrepreneurship students in their final year. For validation of the research instruments, the researcher involved supervisors assigned to him by the university. The data collected was analysed using SPSS version 21 where descriptive statistics involving cross tabulation and calculation of percentages and frequencies where possible were performed. Also, inferential statistics involving calculation of Chi-Square of Independence Test and Freeman Halton Test were performed where possible to find out the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

**3. RESULTS**

To establish perception of students towards Entrepreneurship education for self-employment, job creation and job seeking intentions, the researcher established statements from students: Whether it was students’ choice to study entrepreneurship education, ‘Whether they gave entrepreneurship education the first priority during course selection’, ‘How they felt when they got admission to study entrepreneurship education’, ‘Since it was the only choice available’, ‘They chose it because of peer pressure’ and ‘They chose it to pass with good grades. A 5-point likert-type scale ranging from “Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2) to strongly disagree” (1) was used. This scale was further collapsed to, has influence (strongly agree + agree), undecided (neutral) and has no influence (disagree + strongly disagree). The researcher analyzed the above items using either chi- square or frequencies and percentages. Each item yielded three objectives and hypothesis as follows.

**3.1 Hypothesis H03.1: There is no statistically significant difference between choice to study entrepreneurship education and self-employment intentions of students**

**Table 1:** Analysis for students’ choice to do entrepreneurship education and its influence on self-employment intentions.

Students’ choice to study EE	Self-employment			Total
	No influence	Neutral	Influence	
Reject	3	4	33	40
Neutral	0	3	19	22
Accept	7	10	186	203
Total	10	17	238	265

To test the relationship between choice of entrepreneurship education and self-employment intentions of students, Freeman-Halton test was performed and the results indicated that choice to study entrepreneurship education and self-employment intentions of students have no statistically significant relationship as being indicated by a p-value ( $p=.1328$ ). Therefore, hypothesis **H03.1** (was accepted. This finding implies that the influence of choice to study entrepreneurship education on self-employment intentions is independent.

**3.2 Hypothesis H03.2: There is no statistically significant difference between choice to study entrepreneurship education and job creation intentions of students**

**Table 2:** Analysis for students’ choice to do entrepreneurship education and its influence on job creation intentions.

Students’ choice to study EE	Job creation			Total
	No influence	Neutral	Influence	
Reject	5	12	23	40
Neutral	0	5	17	22
Accept	10	17	176	203
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>265</b>

To test the relationship between choice of entrepreneurship education and job creation intentions of students, Freeman-Halton test was performed and the results indicated that choice to study entrepreneurship education and job creation intentions of students have statistically significant relationship as being indicated by a p-value ( $p=.0002$ ). Therefore, hypothesis **H03.2** was rejected. This finding implies that the influence of choice to study entrepreneurship education on job creation intentions is dependent.

**3.3 Hypothesis H03.3: There is no statistically significant difference between choice to study entrepreneurship education and job seeking intentions of students**

**Table 3.** Analysis for students’ choice to do entrepreneurship education and its influence on job seeking intentions

Students’ choice to study EE	Job seeking			Total
	No influence	Neutral	Influence	
Reject	17	12	11	40
Neutral	4	15	3	22
Accept	68	53	82	203
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>265</b>

To test the relationship between choice of entrepreneurship education and job seeking intentions of students, Freeman-Halton test was performed and the results indicated that choice to study entrepreneurship education and job seeking intentions of students have statistically significant relationship as being indicated by a p-value ( $p=.0017$ ). Therefore, hypothesis **H03.3** was rejected. This finding implies that the influence of choice to study entrepreneurship education on job seeking intentions is dependent.

Still on the establishing whether it was students’ choice to study entrepreneurship education, the researcher went ahead to find out the priority these students gave entrepreneurship education during first course selection by carrying a descriptive statistics consisting of frequencies and percentages as shown below.

**Table 4.** Descriptive statistics showing whether students gave EE the first priority or not.

Priority given to EE by students during course selection		
	Frequency	Percentage
Reject	35	13.2
Undecided	83	31.2
Accept	58	55.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>100</b>

From the analysis in table 3 above, students gave this course the first priority during course selection (**55.6 %**) as opposed to those who did not give this course first priority (**13.2%**) since they had in mind that they will be able to create jobs and be self-employed as opposed to seeking jobs.

Still on the perception of students on entrepreneurship education, the researcher was interested to establish students' feelings after obtaining admission to study entrepreneurship education by carrying out a descriptive statistics consisting of frequencies and percentages as shown below.

**Table 5:** Descriptive statistics showing how students felt after being admitted to study EE

<b>Feelings of students after being admitted to study EE</b>		
	Frequency	Percentage
Not good	3	1.1
Fair + indifferent	25	9.4
Good +	238	89.5
Very good		
<b>Total</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>100</b>

From the analysis above, students were very happy (**89.5%**) when they got admission to study entrepreneurship education as being indicated by the table 44 showing that they had positive perception towards entrepreneurship education.

Further to establish the perception of students towards entrepreneurship education, they were asked to state whether studying entrepreneurship education is necessary or not by choosing between YES (1) or NO (0).

**Table 6:** Descriptive statistics showing the necessity of studying EE

<b>Whether EE is necessary or not</b>		
	Frequency	Percentage
NO	14	5.3
YES	251	94.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>100</b>

It is being revealed that students accepted that entrepreneurship education is necessary as indicated by **251 (94 %)** being a percentage for those who chose YES compared to those who chose NO, **14 (5.2 %)** as per the table 45.

Still on the perception of students on entrepreneurship education, the researcher was interested to establish whether students chose entrepreneurship education because it was the only choice available by carrying out a descriptive statistics consisting of frequencies and percentages as shown below

**Table 7:** Descriptive statistics showing choice of EE based on its availability

<b>Choice of EE based on its availability</b>		
	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	144	55.0
Disagree	50	19.0
Neutral	27	10.3
Agree	30	11.5
Strongly Agree	11	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>100</b>

From the analysis, students did not choose entrepreneurship education because it was the only choice available as per table 46 where **144 (55%)** of students confirmed that they did not choose entrepreneurship education because it was the only choice available.

Still on the perception of students on entrepreneurship education, the researcher was interested to establish whether students chose entrepreneurship education because of peer pressure by carrying out a descriptive statistics consisting of frequencies and percentages as shown below.

**Table 8:** Descriptive statistics showing students' choice of EE and peer pressure

<b>Choice of EE based on peer pressure</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	140	53.6
Disagree	66	25.3
Neutral	38	14.6
Agree	11	4.2
Strongly Agree	6	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>100</b>

From the analysis, students did not choose entrepreneurship education because of peer pressure as per table 47 where **140 (53.6%)** of students confirmed that they did not choose entrepreneurship education because of peer pressure.

The researcher also carried out descriptive statistics to find out if students chose to do entrepreneurship education because it was an easy course to do so as to get good grades and from table 48, students did not choose entrepreneurship education because it was an easy course to pass with good grades as indicated by those who rejected **85.2%** as compared to those who accepted **5.7%**

**Table 9:** Descriptive statistics on students' choice to do EE because it was easy

<b>Priority given to EE by students during course selection</b>			
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	
Reject	225	85.2	
Undecided	24	9.1	
Accept	15	5.7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>100</b>	

From the analysis, it is coming out clearly that students had positive perception towards entrepreneurship education. That if it is taught correctly, it will impart entrepreneurial knowledge that will enable them to practice entrepreneurship after school.

**4. DISCUSSION**

The study established that it was students' choice to choose entrepreneurship education since **76.6%** of the respondents confirmed and also, they confirmed that choosing entrepreneurship education will positively influence their self-employment intentions as **89.8%** of the students confirmed. Scientifically, choice to study entrepreneurship education had no statistically significant relationship with self-employment intentions of students as indicated by Freeman- Halton test ( $p=.1328$ ) being more than **0.05** which was considered to be significant. The study also found that choosing entrepreneurship education will positively influence their self-employment intentions as **81.5%** of the students confirmed. Scientifically, choice to study entrepreneurship education had a statistically significant relationship with job creation intentions of students as indicated by Freeman- Halton test ( $p=.0002$ ) being less than **0.05** which was considered to be significant. This means that students' choice to study entrepreneurship education positively influenced their intentions of creating jobs to others after graduation.

It was also found that **36%** of students confirmed that choice to study entrepreneurship education will make them to be job seekers. Scientifically, choice to study entrepreneurship education had a statistically significant relationship with job seeking intentions of students as indicated by Freeman- Halton test ( $p=.0017$ ) being less than **0.05** which was considered to be significant study also found that **55.6%** of the students gave entrepreneurship education the first priority during course selection and **89.5%** of the students felt very well when they got admission to study entrepreneurship education. **94%** of the students strongly agreed that studying entrepreneurship education was necessary and they gave the following reasons: That it enables students to get entrepreneurial skills for self-employment, that students are able to get business management skills to enable them ran their businesses smoothly and be in a good position to utilize the available business resources very well and that they are able to gain innovative skills, creative skills, critical thinking skills and problem solving skills to enable them ran their businesses very well.

It was also established that **55%** of the students did not choose entrepreneurship education because it was the only course available. **53.6%** of the students did not choose entrepreneurship education because of peer pressure and **85.2%** of the students confirmed that they did not chose entrepreneurship education because they were after getting passing with good grades since it was seemed to be an easy course.



Most studies confirm that students have positive perception towards entrepreneurship education. Students from many literatures say entrepreneurship education enables one to create a job hence being self-employed. For instance, Venkatapathy and Pretheaba (2014) carried out a study on postgraduate students in an Indian University. The study revealed that there was a positive statistically significant correlation between attitude towards entrepreneurship, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control with entrepreneurial intention among students. This means that students with positive attitude towards entrepreneurship would prefer being entrepreneurs than anything else. Joseph and Abel (2013, pp. 69-75) notes that entrepreneurship education had gained a wider acceptance in the region as an alternative career option. In other words, entrepreneurship education was a vehicle to job creation and self-employment. Nnadozie, Akanwa and Nnadozie (2013) agree that students had a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education. Narasmah and Nurzefirah (2018) that Malaysia had worked to cultivate entrepreneurial interest among students so they will pursue entrepreneurship careers after graduation.

Further analysis of survey data found that students' entrepreneurship interest was high. The findings from this literature agree with the findings of this study because in this study, learners had a positive perception towards entrepreneurship education in that it stimulates entrepreneurial spirit among learners. They insisted that if entrepreneurship education is well taught by stimulating methods or active methods, majority of them will venture into business hence creating jobs for others as they become self-employed. Akpochafo and Alika (2018) confirm that the students are of the view that entrepreneurship education will provide training that would make undergraduates creative and innovative if the programme is properly implemented. From this literature, majority of the students who were taking entrepreneurship showed a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education. That through it, their entrepreneurial intention will improve.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that students have a positive perception towards entrepreneurship education for self-employment and job creation. Although some of them would like to be employed after schooling. Majority confirmed that entrepreneurship education is useful in the development of an individual's career option. If well taught, using appropriate methods, it can cultivate one's entrepreneurial culture and boosts entrepreneurial intentions of students. Active methods like site visits, use of role models, ICT, practical teaching involving business incubators in polytechnics where students can apply what they have learned in class, brainstorming and use of successful entrepreneurs as motivational speakers can be much more be used to achieve a boosted entrepreneurship education, effective venture into entrepreneurial activities to create jobs for others as well as being self-employed. While developing entrepreneurship education curriculum, the researcher recommended that parents, tutors, entrepreneurs, and all education stakeholders should be involved. This will make curriculum implementation easier and interesting. The researcher also recommended that the government should simplify its business policies for business entry and growth to encourage entrepreneurship among graduates that will enable them to create jobs for others and be self-employed as opposed to seeking jobs in companies which are not available.

The study further recommends another study on the perception of students towards entrepreneurship education for self-employment, job creation and job seeking intentions among polytechnic students in another region in Kenya to establish whether these findings are similar across students in polytechnics in Kenya.

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